

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: November 29, 2007
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“Police Impersonator Arrested in Pierce County”

A 25 year-old male from Tacoma was arrested on Thursday by a Washington State Patrol Trooper on suspicion of impersonating a police officer.

The incident occurred on November 29th 2007, at approximately 4:22 pm. A witness called 911 and advised a Ford Mustang was traveling northbound on Interstate 5 near Mounts Road with flashing blue lights in the grill. The witness also advised the Mustang had a blue light around the rear bumper and was obviously attempting to get through traffic. The witness provided a license plate of the Ford Mustang. Troopers in the area were advised of the vehicle. A follow up call to the witness revealed the Mustang was continuing northbound on Interstate 5 approaching the Fort Lewis area.

As a result of excellent communications between the witness and Washington State Patrol Communications Officers, the vehicle was located by Trooper Holthaus northbound Interstate 5 at State Route 512. Trooper Holthaus advised he observed the blue light in the rear of the vehicle. Trooper Holthaus, with assistance from Trooper Durbin, stopped the vehicle northbound Interstate 5 to 72nd ST.

The driver, Ronald Cooper of Tacoma, was placed into custody for Impersonating a Police Officer. Cooper advised the lights and siren were just for show. Cooper was booked into Pierce County Jail for Impersonating a Police Officer. Cooper's Mustang was impounded as evidence.

The Ford Mustang had a long blue light mounted in the grill. The blue light flashed many random patterns when activated by the switch mounted near the driver's right leg. The same switch controlled the rear blue lights on the Ford Mustang.

A control head was mounted between the center console and the driver's seat. Activation of the control head produced a loud audio tone that could be heard coming from a speaker in the front of the Ford Mustang. There was also a dial switch on the control head, which when turned, produced several different audio tones close to that of a police vehicle siren.

Records indicated Cooper's Ford Mustang (same license plate) was also called in by a witness on November 19th, 2007 with the same blue lights activated.

The Washington State Patrol appreciates concerned motorists who call in these types of occurrences on our roadways. The Washington State Patrol strives to achieve safer travel on our roadways everyday.

If you are stopped by an unmarked police vehicle, look for these indicators:

1. **Blue lights- These are only legal for law enforcement.** If the vehicle stopping you does not have blue lights, do not stop and call 911. If you are unable to call 911 right away, write down the vehicle plate number and later report it to any law enforcement agency. Most police vehicles are fully marked and come equipped with emergency lights, siren and door markings naming the police agency.
2. **Uniform-** Law enforcement officers will always be wearing a uniform complete with a badge and gun/weapons displayed on a utility belt. All officers will fit this description. Read the patch on the officer's uniform to identify the agency the officer works for and make sure it is a law enforcement agency. If the person stopping you does not have a badge, or weapons on a utility belt displayed, drive away and call 911. If you are unable to call 911 right away, write down the plate number of the vehicle and later report it to any law enforcement agency.

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